CONCIO AD CLERUM,

OR A

VISITATION SERMON,

Preached at Great *Wycomb* within the Diocess of *Lincoln*, *May* 13. 1673.

By *Francis Gregory*, D. D. Rector of *Hambleton*, in the County of *Bucks*, and one of His Sacred Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

——ἱερωσύνη ἁγνισμὸς φρενῶν,
Θεῷ φέρων ἄνθρωπον, ἀνθρώπῳ Θεόν.
Nazianzen. Carm. Iamb.

Πολλοὶ μὲν ὑπηρέται ἀριθμοῦνται καθ' ἑκάστην κώμην, ἄξιοι δὲ λειτουργίας τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ ὀλίγοι.
Basil. Magn. Epist. 181.

Impuri Sacerdotes hominum ludibria, mortalium vilissimi, quisquiliæ, & peripsemata. Cornel. à Lap. in Mal. c. 2. v. 9.

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IMPRIMATUR.

Tho. Tomkyns R. R^mo in Christo Patri ac Domino D^no Gilberto divinâ Providentiâ Archi-Episc. Cant. à Sacris Domesticis.

Ex Æd. Lambeth.
Jun. 21. 1673.

1 Tim. IV. 16.

Take heed to thy Self, and to the Doctrine.

THE Text containeth a double caution; the firſt is this, ἔπεχε, or, as Saint *Chryſoſtom* varieth the compoſition, πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ, *Take heed to thy ſelf*, that branch concerns his *perſon*. The ſecond is this, ἔπεχε τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, *take heed to the Doctrine*, that branch concerns his *miniſtery*; the former relates to his *Converſation*; the latter reſpects his *Function*: So that here are two things, which Saint *Paul* doth commend to *Timothy*, who was his *Son*; and the ſame two things would I commend to you, who are my *brethren*. What was Saint *Pauls command* to *Timothy*, ſhall be my *requeſt* to you, and that firſt is this, ἐπίχετε ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς, *Take heed to your Selves*, that your *lives* be Holy, Blameleſs, and free from all manner of Scandal; and that upon theſe conſiderations;

Firſt, The *holineſs* of our *Lives* is that, which the great *God* of Heaven, whoſe more immediate *Servants* we are, doth moſt ſtrictly require.

It is our buſineſs to *preſs* all Gods Commands upon *other* men; and certainly, we do all ſtand obliged to *obey* them all our ſelves. Now amongſt the commands of God this is one, *the Prieſt ſhall be Holy*, Holy in his *Perſon*, Holy in his *Life*; whoſoever is unholy in either, it muſt not be the *Prieſt*. To mind the *Prieſt* of this and the like Commands, there was engraven, and that by a Divine injunction, upon his golden Plate, קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה *Holineſs to the Lord*. 'Tis obſerved, that in after Ages the word was doubled, קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ to intimate the greater *neceſſity*, and the greater *meaſure* of Holineſs, that ſhould be found in the *Prieſt* more than in *any* man beſides. Thus *Cornelius à Lapide*, *Sacerdotes Sanctitatis ſint portenta*, God requires that the *Prieſts* ſhould be the *Prodigies* and *wonders*, *i. e.* the grand *examples* of *holy* lives. But,

Lev. 21. 8.

In Zach. c. 3. v. 8.

Secondly, The *Holineſs* of our *lives* is that, which our own uſual *Names* and *Titles* do require. We uſually ſay, *Bonum nomen bonum omen*, Good names are lucky ſignes; they ſhould be ſo with us; we are ſtiled ἱερεῖς, *Sacerdotes*, which termes do ſuppoſe as well the *Integrity* of our *Lives*, as the *Functions* of our *Office*. The Title of an *Archbiſhop* is this, *Your Grace*; and that of the *Pope* himſelf, *His Holineſs*. Hiſtorians tell us, that when *Æneas Sylvius* came to be *Pope*, he thought fit to change his name, *rejicite Æneam, recipite Pium*, old *Æneas* muſt be forgot; 'tis *Pius* that muſt now be received.

Non provenit dignitas ex Nomine, ſed Virtute; merito non vocabulo; ſanctitate, non Miniſterio. Ber. Serm. de Cœna Domini.

Sacerdotes Dei non immerito vos dixerim, ſi vixeritis Sacerdotaliter. Bern. Serm. de Cœna Domini.

Ut ſit quiſque verum Sacerdos, oportet ut non ſolo Sacramento, ſed juſtitiâ quoque induatur. Aug. contra literas Petiliani, lib. 2.

I read, that *Arcadius* the Emperor writing to *Flavianus* Biſhop of *Antioch* began his Letter thus,

Ἥκουσεν

Ἤκουσεν ἡ ὁσιότης σου, your *Holineſs* hath heard. And the *Council* of *Carthage* in their Synodical Letter to *Celeſtine* Biſhop of *Rome*, tells him, Ἡ σὴ Ἁγιωσύνη ἐδήλωσεν, your *Holineſs* hath declared. It ſeems that *Holineſs*, as it is one of *Gods* moſt glorious *Attributes*, ſo is it one of his *Miniſters* moſt neceſſary *Qualifications* too.

Our Saviour calleth us *the Salt of the earth*, and certainly the *purer* and *whiter* the Salt is, 'tis ſo much the better; our Saviour ſtiles us, *the Light of the world*, and doubtleſs, the more *pure* the *oyl* is, and the leſs *ſnuff* we have, the *brighter* ſhall we *ſhine*. I remember *Cornelius à Lapide* tells us, that the *Biſhop* in the Church is, *inſtar Solis*, like the *Sun* in the Firmament; and if ſo, methinks there is no inferiour *Miniſter*, but in his own lower *Orb* ſhould be a *Star*; and if in Saint *John*'s language the *Biſhop* be, as we grant he is, ὁ Ἄγγελος, an earthly *Angel*; then certainly, there is no *Clergy-man* whatſoever, but is obliged to live as becomes a *Saint*. But,

Matt. 5. 13.

Matt. 5. 14.

In Epiſt. prior. ad Tim. c. 3.

Apoc. 2. 1.

Sacerdos Domini Angelus. Ber. lib. *de Præcepto & diſpenſat.* Cap. 12.

Thirdly, The *Holineſs* of our *Lives* is that, which our *Employment* doth require. Saint *Paul* puts the queſtion, τὶς ἱκανὸς; who is ſufficient for this Sacred Function? Saint *Chryſoſtom* ſpends *ſix* Tracts upon this one Argument, ὅσον τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἀξίωμα, how *Sacred* the *Prieſthood* is, and how *holy* the *Prieſt* himſelf ſhould be. Authors tell us, that after the death of *Nectarius* Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, ſeveral Presbyters, deſiring to be his Succeſſour, were refuſed, as being, ἀνάξιοι τῆς ἱερωσύνης, unworthy of that great employment. Now, that the *employment*, not of the *Biſhop* only, but the *Presbyter* and *Deacon* too, requires this *Holineſs* of our reſpective lives, will appear from two conſiderations.

2 Cor. 2. 16.

Chryſoſt. Tom. 6. *Epiſcopi, Presbyteri, aut Diaconi eſſe io nihil in hac vita difficilius, laboriosius, periculoſius.* Aug. Epiſt. 148. ad Epiſc. Valerium. *Georgius Archiep. Alexand. in vita Chryſoſt.*

First,

Firſt, we have to do, by vertue of our employment, in an eſpecial manner, with an *holy God.* 'Tis Saint *Bernards* caution, *vide, ne immundus ad Deum accedas,* when you come to God, look you be *clean.* It is Gods own Argument, *let the Prieſts ſanctifie themſelves*; and why the *Prieſts* more than the *people?* why thus, *let the Prieſts, that draw nigh to God, ſanctifie themſelves*; the Text implyeth, that there is ſomething in *God*, which requires holineſs in the *Prieſt*, that Miniſters before him, and what that is, *Moſes* tells us, *the Prieſt ſhall be holy*, upon what ſcore? why thus, *for I the Lord am holy.* It ſeems that an *unholy Prieſt* is not fit to deal with an *holy God.* But,

1. Exod. 19. 22.

Lev. 21. 8.

Secondly, We have to do, by vertue of our employment, in an eſpecial manner, with *holy things.* See what they are in three particulars;

Μὴ καθαρῷ καθαρῶ ἐφάπτεσθαι, μὴ ἀ δεμιτὸν ἦ. Synefius Epiſt. 57. contra Andronicum.

Firſt, We have to do, in an eſpecial manner, with the *Word* of *God*: thus Saint *Paul, He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*, and what kind of Word is that? the ſame Apoſtle ſtiles it, γεαφὰς ἁγίας, the *holy* Scriptures. And well he may; for the *Author* of the Scriptures is, ἅγιον πνεῦμα, the *holy* Spirit; the grand *Subject* of the Scriptures is *Chriſt*, ὁ Ἅγιος τῦ Θεῦ, that *holy* one of God. And the *Pen-men* of the Scriptures are expreſly ſtiled, ἅγιοι Θεῦ ἄνθρωποι, *holy* men of God. And certainly, if the Scriptures be thus holy in their *Author*, in their *ſubject* matter, and in their *Scribes*, 'tis but fit that they ſhould be holy in their *interpreters* too.

2 Cor. 5. 19.

2 Tim. 3. 15.

2 Pet. 1. 21.

So Sacred are the Oracles of our God, that *Cornelius à Lapide* tells us, *Charles Borromæus*, whom he ſtiles, *Novus Mediolanenſium Ambroſius*, did never read the Scriptures, no not in his old age, but *nudo capite*,

Corn. à Lap. in Epiſt. dedicat. ad Hovium Archiepiſc. Mechl.

capite, & flexis genibus, with a *bare head*, and a *bended knee*. And methinks that, which the *Turks* are ſaid to write upon their *Alcoran*, may with better reaſon be written upon our *Bibles*, *nemo immundus me tangat*, let no *unclean* perſon touch me; God himſelf hath diſcovered his mind in this particular, *unto the wicked, ſaith God, what haſt thou to do to declare my Statutes*? 'tis ſuch a Text as once ſtopp'd *Origens* mouth; and if our lives be wicked, may juſtly ſtop ours too. Sure it is, if the Scriptures be thus holy, and if theſe holy Scriptures be, as Saint *Ambroſe* was wont to call them, *libri ſacerdotales*, the *Prieſts* Books, ſo ours, as no mans elſe; we are concerned, that our *perſons* and our *lives* be, what theſe Books not only *are*, but require too, Righteous, Juſt and Holy.

Pſal. 50. 16.

Τίνος ἕνεκεν ἀνεγνῶτε ἅγια ἁγίων καὶ δίκαια δικαίων ἄνθρωπος, καὶ τὰναντίον πράττεις, *Chryſ. in locum. Corn. à Lap. in Epiſt. ad Heb.*

Secondly, We have to do, in an eſpecial manner, with that ſolemn duty of *Prayer*; ſo the Prophet, *Let the Prieſts, the Miniſters of the Lord, ſay, ſpare thy people O Lord*, &c. the Miniſter is *Gods* mouth to *man*, and *mans* mouth to *God*; from God we bring *Commands*, from man we carry *Petitions*. And how this muſt be done, Saint *Paul* tells us, *I will, that men pray, lifting up, χεῖρας ὁσίους, holy hands*, 'tis not *manus lotas, waſht hands*, but, *manus innocentes, innocent hands*, ſo *Tertullian*. Certainly, that *tongue*, that *begs* a mercy; that *eye*, which *expects* a kindneſs; that *hand*, which would fain *receive* ſome boon from God; muſt be, as *Calvin* words it, *puri cordis indices*, ſignes of a *pure* heart, and a *ſpotleſs* Soul.

Joel 2. 17.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

Ὅσιας ἐπιφαίνειν χεῖρας, τουτέστι καθαρὰς δὲ ἀφαγνίσεως καὶ ὁσιότητος, διὰ ἐλεημοσύνης καθαιρομένας. *Oecum. in locum. Calvin. in* 1 Tim. c. 2.

Thirdly, We have to do, in an eſpecial manner, with the holy *Sacraments*, thoſe φρικτὰ μυστήρια thoſe *dreadful* and *ſacred* myſteries of the Goſpel.

Saint

Saint *Bernard* tells us, that the administration of Sacraments is, *munus plus quàm Angelicum*, such a service, as *Angels* never had to do with. It's true, *Angels* have been *Preachers*, ἰδὺ, εὐαγγελίζομαι. *Behold I bring you good tidings*, &c. An *Angel* hath the honour to be the very *first Preacher* of our new born Jesus; but as to the *Administration* of *Sacraments*, 'tis the *Minister* alone that hath to do with *this*.

Nulli Angelorum, nullis spiritibus superni, &c. Bern. serm. in Cœna Domini.

Ecc. 2. 10.

And certainly, upon this score, is the *Minister* highly obliged, to be *holy*; thus Saint *Chrysostom*, Χρὴ τὸν ἱερωμένον ὥσπερ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἑστῶτα τοῖς ὑπὲρ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς μεταξὺ τῶν δυνάμεων ἐκείνων, οὕτως εἶναι καθαρὸν, it behoveth the *Minister*, when he stands at Gods *Table*, to be as *holy*, as if he now stood in *Heaven* in the midst of Angels. We must not be like those, whom Saint *Bernard* thus complains of, *non sicut Sacerdotes in Altari, sed sicut carnifices in Macello*, they behaved themselves not like *Priests* at the *Altar*, but like *Butchers* in the *Shambles*. We must remember, 'tis such a Service, that requires, as *Thomas Theodidactus* expresseth it, *Mundas manus, purum os, immaculatum cor*, clean hands, a pure mouth, and an unspotted Soul. But,

Τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις εἰ τις οὐκ ἔστιν ἅγιος, μὴ μεταδότω, Chrysost. τὸ μὴ ἀναξίως, &c. Ἡ δὲ θυσιαστικὴ τελετὴ ἀνίσταται πᾶσι τοῖς ἱερατικῶς τετελειωμένοις ζωὴν καθιερωμένην μεταχειρίζειν. Dionys. Areop. de Hier. Eccles. c. 5.

Bern. in serm. de Cœna Domini.

De imitat. Christi, l. 4. c. 12.

Fourthly, The holiness of our lives is that, to which the *malice* of our *enemies* doth oblige us.

Sophocles tells us, what an imprudent thing it is φῦσαι πολὺν ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων, to give an enemy great occasion to laugh and jeer us, and surely, that counsel, which *Demosthenes* gave the *Athenians* in this matter, concerns us this day, ἀεὶ δεῖν, ὅπως ἂν μὴ χάιρωσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ, ποιεῖν, we are obliged to take heed, that we give not our *enemies* just ground to *rejoyce* against *us*.

Sophocles in Antigone.

Demosth. de falsa legatione.

That

That the *Church* of *England* hath ſtore of enemies, we are too ſure; the *Papiſt*, the *Heretick*, the *Sectary*, the *Atheiſt*, all theſe are the profeſſed enemies of our Church. Now, if Miniſters prove ſcandalous, what then? May, I not ſay,

Hoc Ithacus velit, & magno mercentur Atridæ? Virgil. Æneid.

'Tis impoſſible to name that thing, whereby we can gratifie our enemies more, than by being ſcandalous. 'Tis ſure, that the *Papiſt*, who magnifieth his *own good* works, will magnifie *our bad* ones too; 'tis ſure that the Fanatick, who glorieth in the *ſtrictneſs* of *his own* life, will take advantage from the *looſeneſs* of *ours*; and as for the *Atheiſt*, who owns no God, we ſhall but *confirm* and *comfort* him in that monſtrous opinion, if we, who profeſs to *ſerve* a God, do *walk* as if there were none.

Well; ſince we have ſuch ſtore of enemies, let us make the beſt *uſe* of them, that we can; from the conſideration of their *malice* let us learn to be ſo much the more *innocent*; let us be as ſure to *avoid* crimes, as they are to *cenſure* them. If a Sectary ſhall object that we are *Gluttons* or *Drunkards*, let our conſtant *Sobriety* and *Temperance* confute them: if Fanaticks ſhall ſay, as commonly they do, that we are *covetous* muckworms, let us give them the *lie*, not by *uncivil* language, not by *evil words*, but by *good works*.

And perhaps this may be the deſign of Heaven in letting looſe theſe Beaſts upon us; perhaps God deſigns by the *worſt* of men to make us ſo much the *better*. I remember, *Plutarch* tells us the opinion of *Diogenes*, that whoſoever would lead a vertuous

Plutarchus. in Tract. πῶς ἄν τις δικαίοτον ἢ κίλαιτο &c.

life, doth ſtand in need either περὶ φίλων γνησίων, of *right* and plain dealing *friends*, or elſe περὶ διαπύρων ἐχθρῶν, of *incenſed* and inraged *enemies*; and the reaſon, he gives, is this, As for our cordial *friends*, it will be their endeavour to preſerve us from vice, νουθετοῦντες by their admonitions; but if theſe fail, 'tis poſſible that our bitter *enemies* may better effect it λοιδοροῦντες, by their reproaches.

And O that this might be the bleſſed event of our enemies accurſed malice! If we will not be ſtricter in our lives to comply with the *Commands* of an *Holy God*, yet let us be ſo to eſcape the *Calumnies* of *wicked men*. Would we but make this advantage of our enemies, how might we ſay with *Ovid*, *aliquiſque malo fuit uſus in illo?* What cauſe ſhould we have, not only, as our Saviour bids us, to bleſs our *enemies themſelves*, but alſo to bleſs *God* for them, as being, though not proper and Phyſical *means*, yet happy *occaſions* to make us wiſer. But however, the way for us to confute their objections, is not to *diſpute* like *Scholars*, but to *live* like *Chriſtians*; to *cleanſe* our own *hands* is the ſureſt courſe to *ſtop* their *mouths*: and were but this once effectually done, our eſtabliſhment would be the firmer; the Motto of our *Church* would be like that of *Venice*, *Nec flatu, nec fluctu movear*, all the ſtorms and tempeſts, that *men* or *Devils* could raiſe againſt us, would never ſhake us. But,

Ovid. Met. 2.

Fifthly, The Holineſs of our lives is that, to which the *Church* of *God* doth much oblige us; what hath been, and ſtill is, the Practice of the Church, as to this, we may ſee in three particulars.

πρὸς ἐλεγθεὶς ἀπὸ φαυλείας, ἢ πορνείας, ἢ ἄλλοις ἐγκλήμασι κατακριθείς. Ariſt. in Apoſt. Can. 61.

Firſt, It hath been the conſtant care of the *Primitive* Church, and ſtill is the care of ours, that no ſcandalous perſon be *received* into holy *Orders*. To

To prevent this, Saint *Baſil* tells us, that the primitive Church did τὰς ὑπερηφάνους παραδέχεσθαι μετὰ πολλῆς δοκιμασίας, receive no Miniſter but with a *great deal of Examination*. The main things enquired into were, πίστις, γράμματα, βίος, a mans *Faith*, *Learning*, and *Life*, and the law was ſtrict in all. As to *Faith*, to be ſure no *Heretick* could be Ordained; as to *Learning*, the ſtatute was this, ὃν ἀδήμιῳ τάξει κληρικὸν εἶναι ἀγράμματον, or, as *Juſtinian* otherwiſe words it, ἀδεὴς ἀγραμματοσύνης εἰς κλῆρον καταλέγεται, a man that is void of all learning, ſhall not have the leaſt ſacred Office in the Church of God.

Baſil. Magn. in Epiſt. ad Chartophylac.

Εἴ τινες ἀνεξετάστως τοιοῦτοι χειροτονοῦνται πρεσβύτεροι, τότε ὁ κανὼν ὁ παρὸν ἰσχύει. *Concil. Nic. Can. 9. Novel. 123. c. 12, 13, 14. Juſt in Epiſt. ad Epiphanium Archiep. Conſtantinopol.*

But as to the *Life* and *Converſation*, the Law if poſſible, was ſtricter yet, τὸν βίον σκοπεῖν διαπίζομεν, &c. ſaith the Emperour; we command all the Biſhops of the Empire to Ordain no man whatſoever, till they have firſt enquired, and that ſtrictly too, into his *manners*. This *law* was made to confirm the *Canons* of ſeveral Councils, among which this was one, ὁ χειροτονούμενος ἐπιχηρύττοιτο ὃν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. As with us, the names of perſons to be *married*, ſo with them the names of perſons to be *ordained*, were ſolemnly publiſh'd in the Congregation, that ſo, whoſoever could, might object againſt them. That this was the only reaſon of that practice, may be concluded from that of *Juſtinian*, ὁ βουλόμενος κατηγορεῖν τοῦ μέλλοντος χειροτονεῖσθαι, &c. Whoſoever can and will object againſt any perſon to be Ordained, hath his liberty.

Joannis Antiochemi Capita Eccleſiaſtica.

Concil. Chalcedon. Oecum. 4. Can. 6.

Balſam. Conſt. Eccl. Collectio. lib. 3. ex Novel.

Well, ſuppoſe any crime were objected and proved, what then? why thus, εἰς κλῆρον μὴ προσαγέσθω, let not that man be Ordained, let him not be admitted into the Clergy; ſo ſay the *Apoſtles Canons*.

Εἴ τις κατηγορεῖται γνησίως καὶ τοῦτο, καὶ ἐλεγχθείη, μὴ εἰς κλῆρον προσαγέσθω. *Apoſt. Can. 61.*

Ζητήσεως γινομένης ὁπωσδήποτε χειροτονία. *Balſam. Conſtit. Eccl. Collect. l. 3.*

Again, ſuppoſe the perſon himſelf did confeſs the *guilt* of ſuch and ſuch crimes, but withal teſtified his *repentance*, how ſped he then? why, τοῦτος ὁ κανὼν οὐ προσίεται, the *Canon* admits them not; ſo the Council of *Nice*. 'Tis that, which the firſt Council of *Toledo* thus confirms, *placuit ut pœnitentes non admittantur ad Clerum.* And this Pope *Siricius*, *Si probabiliter vixerit, ſi vitæ integritas ſit approbata*, &c. If a mans *life* be *plauſible* and well approved, he is ſo far in a capacity of holy *Orders*: but ſuppoſe a man hath been a great *ſinner* and now *repents*, what then? why, his decree runs thus, *nec poſt pœnitudinem*, &c. ſuch a man notwithſtanding all the repentance that he can profeſs, ſhall not be made a Miniſter.

Concil. Nicen. Can. 9.

Siricius in Epiſt. Decretal. Dion. Exig. Collect.

Nay more, a man might be refuſed in this caſe for the ſcandalous lives of his relations, Ὁ λαϊκὸς, ἂν ἡ γυνὴ μεμοίχευται, ἢ κληρῶται, If the *wife* be an *Adultereſs*, the *husband*, though never ſo *chaſt*, ſhall be no *miniſter*; ſo ſaith the Council of *Neocæſarea*. And certainly all theſe *Laws* and *Canons*, made purpoſely to *prevent* the *Ordination* of *Debauched* perſons, are ſo many evidences, how greatly the *Church* of God doth abhorr *Scandal* in its *Clergy*. But,

Concil. Neocæſ. Can. 8.

Secondly, It hath been the great care of the Chriſtian *Church* to prevent in all perſons, that have been ordained, not only the *foul* and *groſſer acts*, but even all *occaſions*, *jealouſies*, and *ſuſpicions* of Scandal. What was the practice of the Church in former ages, as to this, may be ſeen in theſe Four inſtances.

Cavete omnes ſuſpiciones, & quicquid probabiliter fingi poteſt, ne fingatur, antè devita. Hieronymus ad Nepot. de vita Clericorum.

Firſt, To prevent the leaſt ſuſpicion of *uncleanneſs* in the Miniſter, the Council of *Nice* forbids him

to

to receive into his houſe, γυναῖκας συνεισάκτους, *mulieres extraneas, aſcititias*; or, as others nearer to the *Greek*, *ſubintroductas*, any woman, except a *mother*, a *ſiſter*, an *aunt*, or ſome ſuch perſon, in whom there could not be, as the *Council* words it, πᾶσα ὑποψία, any the leaſt *ſuſpicion*. It ſeems that there were in that Age certain women entertained in Chriſtian Families, ἀγαπηταὶ λεγόμεναι, ſaith *Epiphanius*, γάμου καὶ συνουσίας χωρὶς, ὅτε ἐπὶ παιδοποιΐᾳ, ὅ ἐστιν ἐξ ἀκολασίας, ſaith St. *Chryſoſtom*; they were not Wives nor Concubines; they were not uſed for the Procreation of children, nor the ſatisfaction of Luſt; no, ταύτην τὴν Συμβίωσιν ἀδελφότητα ὀνομάζουσι, ſaith *Gregory Nyſſene*; this cohabitation they ſtiled the *Brotherhood* and *Siſterhood*; and they had, πολλὰς αἰτίας καὶ προφάσεις, many reaſons and pretences for it, as St. *Chryſoſtom* tells us. But yet notwithſtanding, this muſt not ſerve the *Miniſters* turn; the *Law* excludes all ſuch *women* from his houſe, and the *reaſon* alledged was this, ὅ μικρὰν ὕβριν ἐποίει, it did occaſion no ſmall *ſuſpicion* and ground of reproach.

Concil. Nicæn. Can. 3. Fuſtellus in Codic. Can. Eccl. Univerſæ.

Con. Nic. Can. 3.

Epiphan. Hær. 63. de Origenit. Chryſoſt. περὶ τοὺς ἀγάμους παρθένους συνουσίκτους. Gregorius Nyſ. περὶ παρθενίας. cap. 23. Chryſoſt. ubi ſupra.

Joan. Antioch. Nomocanon. ex 19. Conſt. Tit. 3.

And as to that other ſort of women, who were ſtiled, γυναῖκες διάκονοι or διακόνισσαι, Deaconeſſes, whoſe buſineſs was, in ſome caſes, to attend the Miniſter and ſerve the Church, to prevent all ſuſpicion of *levity* and *wantonneſs*, the Council of *Chalcedon* decreed that no ſuch woman ſhould be Ordained, πρὸ ἐτῶν τεσσαράκοντα, before ſhe were at leaſt Fourty years of age. And leſt this Canon ſhould not be enough to prevent all jealouſie, *Theodoſius* made a Law, that no ſuch woman ſhould be employed, except ſhe were, ὑπὲρ ἑξήκοντα ἔτη, above Sixty years old; ſo great was their age, that the Council of *Laodicea* expreſly calls them πρεσβύτιδας, and accordingly

Concil. Chalced. Can. 15. Μηδεμία γυνὴ χειροτονείσθω διακόνισσα πρὸ ἐτῶν τεσσαράκοντα ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ ἄρα ἐπὶ γήρᾳ ἢ ἀσθενείᾳ. *Novel. 6. c. 6.* Ἡμεῖς ὁρίσαμεν ἐξήκοντα ἐτῶν εἶναι τὸν ἀριθμὸν, ἐν ᾧ γένοιτο διακονίσσα. *Balſ. Conſt. Eccl. Coll. ex lib. 1. Codic. Concil. Laodic. Can. 11.*

Hirronymus in Epist. ad Geruntiam.

ingly St. *Hierom*, *Anus Ecclesiæ*, the *Elder* or *Ancient* women of the Church; whatever their employment was, there was no *Young* woman admitted to it for fear of *Scandal*. But,

Secondly, To prevent the suspicion of *covetousness*, the sin that is so usually objected against the Clergy,

Concil. Nic. Can. 17.

Apost. Can. 44.

the Council of *Nice* doth severely forbid the Minister, τόκους λαμβάνειν, to take any *use* for the money he lends; no not ἑκατοστὰς not so much as *one* in the

Leo decret. 40.

hundred; and that, as *Pope Leo* afterward decreed, *nomine aut suo aut alieno*, either in his own name, or any mans else. The design of this *Canon* was to prevent Αἰσχροκερδίαν all suspicion of *filthy Lucre* in the

Justel. in Can. Univ. Eccl. 17.

Clergy; so *Justellus*.

Concil. Chalced. Can. 3.

Concil. Carthag. Can. 16.

Negotiatorem Clericum quasi Pestem fuge. Hieron. ad Nepotianum de vita Cler.

And perhaps, the Council of *Chalcedon* might have some respect to this, which forbids the Minister, μισθώσθαι κτήματα, or, as the Council of *Carthage* otherwise words it, Ἐκλήπτορα γενέσθαι, to be a *Taker*, a *Renter*, a *Farmer* of *Lands*. To the like end seems

Joan. Antioch. Nomocan. Constit. 36.

that law of *Justinian*, ἀπαγορεύομεν κληρικοῖς ταβλίζειν, 'tis bad Greek, but it seems the Emperour thought the constitution was good, and this it was, *We forbid all Clergy-men to play at Tables*; and 'tis probable enough, that the reason was to prevent the *suspicion* of *Covetousness*.

Thirdly, To prevent the suspicion of *rioting*, gluttony, and drunkenness in the minister, the Council of

Concil. Laod. Can. 24.

Laodicea doth strictly charge him, Εἰς καπηλεῖον μὴ εἰσιέναι, not so much once as to enter into a *Tavern*, *Inn*, or *Ale-house*. The same thing did the Council

Non debet, qui animarum curam gerit, tabernas intrare, nisi necessitate coactus. Aug. serm. 36. ad fratres in Eremo.

of *Carthage* enjoyn, only with this exception, Εἰ μηδὲν ξενίας ἀνάγκη συναθυρέντας, we forbid all Mini-

Concil. Carthag. Can. 40. Apost. Can. 54. Ὁ μὴ χρὴ τελῶν ἀνάγκης κλησεὶς εἰς καπηλεῖον εἰσιέναι, ἀφοριζέσθω. Arist. in Apost. Can. 54.

sters

ſters to enter ſuch *Publick* houſes, unleſs the neceſſity of *travail* oblige them to it.

And as the Canons of theſe *Councils* forbid the Miniſter all *publick* Houſes, ſo did the Synod of *Laodicea* reſtrain all Clergy-men from all *private revellings* and merry meetings, οὐ δεῖ κληρικὸν ὀκ συμβολὴν συμπόσια ἐπιτελεῖν, 'tis not for Clergy-men to joyn their money and club for wine and junkets, as other men do. Once more,

Concil. Laod. Can. 54. Non licet Clerico extra beram bibere, vel de domo in domum transire, & prandium vel cœnam ordinare. Aug. ſerm. 36. ad fratres in Eremo.

Fourthly, To prevent the ſuſpicion of voluptuouſneſs and the love of worldly delights and paſtimes in the Miniſters, the law forbad them not only, κυβεύειν, to play at dice themſelves; but τῶν παιζόντων θεωρητὰς γενέσθαι, to be ſtanders by and lookers on, whilſt others play. To the ſame purpoſe the Sixth Council in *Trullo* at *Conſtantinople* forbids the Miniſter, ταῖς ἱπποδρομίαις ἀνιέναι, to be preſent at *horſe-races*; and the Council of *Tours* called by *Charles* the Great, forbad all Clergy-men to *hawk*, *hunt*, &c. Perhaps ſome of theſe Canons may be too *ſevere*, forbidding the Miniſter ſuch recreations, as, being innocent in themſelves, may, by ſome circumſtances, be rendred as neceſſary for him, if not as *food*, yet at leaſt as *phyſick*; but yet they prove that, which I bring them for, namely, the care of the Church to prevent all *ſuſpicion* of *ſcandal* in the *Clergy*. But,

Apoſt. Can. 42. Novel. 123. de Epiſc. Aud. Joan. Antioch. Nomocan. Conſtit. 36. Concil. ſextum in Trullo Can. 24. Symſons Church-Hiſtory.

Thirdly, It hath been the conſtant practice of the Chriſtian *Church*, where it could not by the *Authority* of all its *Sanctions prevent* Scandal, there by the *Severity* of its *laws* to *puniſh* it.

There are two ſorts of Perſons, in whom the *ſin* is, and the *puniſhment* ſhould be greater than in other men; the *Magiſtrate* and the *Miniſter*; As to the Magiſtrate, *Laertius* tells us, that amongſt the laws of *Solon*,

Diog. Laertius de vita Solonis. *Solon*, this was one, τῷ Ἄρχοντι, ἂν μεθύων λαφθῇ, θάνατον εἶναι ζημίαν, If a *Magiſtrate* ſhould be found *drunk* let him *die* for it.

Indeed, as to the *Miniſter*, the *Laws* of the *Church* are not *ſanguinary*, but they have been ſomewhat *ſevere*; the *cenſures*, which the *Church* paſſed, were proportionable to thoſe *crimes*, which any *Clergy-man* committed: in ſome leſſer caſes the ſentence was only this, ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἐνιαυτὺς πάσης ὑπουργίας κωλυέσθω, or, as 'tis otherwiſe worded, ἐπὶ τριετίαν χωριζέσθω τῆς λειτουργίας, in our *dialect* and according to our diſcipline, *let him be ſuſpended for three years time.* But in other caſes thus, ἀφοριζέσθω, let him be *excommunicated*; upon ſome miſcarriages thus, ἀπὸ τῶν βαθμῶν ἐκπιπτέτω, let him be *degraded*; upon other crimes it roſe higher, καθαιρείσθω, let him be *depoſed*, ἐξωθείσθω, let him be *thruſt out* of the Miniſtery; or, which is all one, εἰς τοὺς λαϊκοὺς ἀπωθείσθω, let him be *turned out* amongſt the *Laicks*.

Joan. Antioch. Nomoc. Conſtit. 36. Juſtinian. ad Epiphan. Archiep. Conſtantino. Apoſtolorum Can. 5.

Apoſtolorum Can. 6.

And if once this were done, there was no place left for repentance; in this reſpect the Church dealt more ſeverely with the *Clergy* than they did with the *Laity*; what *crime* ſoever a *Lay-man* had committed, yet after he had been ſo much time amongſt the προσκλαίοντες, ſo much time amongſt the ἀκροώμενοι, and ſo much time amongſt the ὑποπίπτοντες, after he endured the *diſcipline* of the Church and manifeſted his repentance, he was readmitted, πρὸς σύστασιν, to ſtand and pray with the Congregation, he was, in the Council of *Laodicea*'s language, a man thought fit, προσάγεσθαι τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, to be received into the *Communion* of the *Church* again, and the *Participation* of all its *privileges*, as if he had never ſo highly ſinned.

Concil. Nic. Can. 11. Concil. Nic. Can. 12. Ὅσοι ἥμαρτον πεῖν εἰκοσαετεῖς γενέσθαι, πέντε ἢ δέκα ἔτεσιν ὑποπεσόντες, κοινωνίας προσχαίνουσιν εἰς τὰς προσευχάς. Concil. Ancyran. Can. 16. Concil. Laod. Can. 2.

But if a *Clergy-man*, for ſome notorious and ſcandalous

lous crime, was once *degraded, depoſed,* and *turned out* of his office; if once he became, as the Apoſtles Canons word it, ἀνιερῶ, unhallowed; if once he were made, as the Nicene Biſhops expreſs it, τῦ κλήρυ καθαιρεθήσεσθαι, and again, τῆς Διακονίας πεπαῦσθαι, to ceaſe from his Miniſtery; ſuch a perſon, what repentance ſoever he might profeſs, was *ſeldom* reſtored; to be ſure, he did, μηδὲν τῶν ἁγίων ἐπιτελεῖν, perform no holy office any more for ever; ſo much doth the Council of *Ancyra* inform us. And now methinks, all this practice of the Chriſtian *Church,* in its ſeveral ages, is enough to convince us, that *Scandal* in a *Miniſter* is by no means to be endured.

Apoſtol. Can. 5.

Comil. Nic. Can. 17, & 18.

Symeonis Magiſtri Canonum Epitome. Θεσσαρέων, ἢ ὁμιλεῖν, ἢ ὅλως λειτυργῶν μὴ ἐξεῖναι. *Conc. Ancyr. Can. 1.*

Uſes.

FIrſt, Conſider how much to blame thoſe perſons needs muſt be, who *charge* thoſe Miniſters with *Scandal* who *deſerve* it not.

The truth is, in ſome mens mouths, we are *all* grown *ſcandalous*; we are ſcandalous, *eo nomine,* becauſe we are Miniſters; for a Miniſter to be *ordained,* as *Timothy* and *Titus* certainly were; for a Miniſter to comply with the lawful Commands of Authority, as St. *Paul* himſelf doth ſtrictly require, 'tis grown little leſs, than to be a *Prieſt* of *Baal.* Nay more, there are ſome amongſt us, who would be reputed Miniſters themſelves; ſuch, I mean, as formerly received their own ordination, as we ſtill do from the *Biſhop,* and yet now, do not only *take,* but *ſnatch* and *create* occaſions to *declaim* againſt their *ſacred function*; acting too much like thoſe *unthankful clouds,* which *darken* the *Sun* that *raiſed* them.

Σὺ γὰρ οὐκ ἔφερες ξας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἱερέα καὶ θράσους ἀναπλήσεις *Dionyſ. Areop. Epiſt. ad Demophilum Monachum.*

Rom. 13. 1. Heb. 13. 17.

But beſides theſe, there are many amongſt us, who

do moſt narrowly watch for all our haltings; who *rejoyce* to ſee us *trip*, hoping that every *ſtumble* will tend toward our *final fall*. I am perſwaded, that thoſe very *humane infirmities* of ours, which are the *ſubject* of our own daily *ſorrow*, are grown the *matter* of their *triumph*; they will not allow us to be the *Miniſters* of *God*, becauſe they ſee in us the *imperfections* of *men*.

Nor is it enough with theſe barely to *report* our *miſcarriages*, but they muſt *advance* them too; 'tis not more uſual than eaſie, through the *poiſon* of their virulent *tongues*, to make our *mole-hills* ſwell into *mountains*, and every *mote* to become a *beam*. To *withdraw* the people from our *Miniſtery*, their art is to *vilifie* our *perſons*; and the ſureſt way to do that, is, to *aggravate* our *failings*, and make them *crimes*; there is not the leaſt *Gnat* that we ſwallow, but repreſented through their *perſpective*, appears like a *Camel*, and carrieth a *Bunch* on his back.

The great ſin, that is commonly charged againſt moſt of us, is that of *covetouſneſs*; they cannot ſay, that we are *dumb dogs*; but ſomething they will ſay, and that muſt be this, we are *greedy dogs*; ſince they muſt grant, that we *bark*, they are concerned to affirm, that we *bite*, and that more hard than becomes us. Well, here is their *Indictment*, but what's their *Evidence?* How is this ſore *Article* proved againſt us? Why thus, the *Miniſter*, who perhaps hath nothing elſe but his *Tithes* to *live* on, makes bold to demand, what *God* and *man* have made his *due*; we would fain have ſomething, and that ſomething is our *own* too, to *enable* us to thoſe *acts* of *Hoſpitality* and *Charity*, which *God requires*, and *theſe* very *men*, who *grudg* at our *Tithes*, do *themſelves expect*; we would

have

have ſomething alſo to *maintain* our *families*, to *furniſh* our *ſtudies*, to *find* us *books*, that we may *preach*, and *bread* that we may *live*. Yea, *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, this is it, that makes us *covetous*; 'tis becauſe we would not loſe that which *every* man elſe is allowed to demand, I mean, our *own*; we are therefore *covetous*, becauſe we are not willing to *ſtarve*; or which is almoſt as bad, to *beg* or live on *alms*.

If there be any perſon in this aſſembly, that doth either *raiſe* or *ſpread* ſuch *falſe reports* againſt the *Miniſters* of *God*, let him conſider, what *ſin* he commits, and what *danger* he runneth. And here, I might as eaſily *foretel* you, what ſuch *falſe accuſers* are like to *ſuffer* in the *next* world; as to *inform* you, what they have already ſuffered in *this*.

I remember *Tully* tells us, *aliud eſt maledicere, aliud accuſare*, 'tis one thing to *reproach*, another thing to *accuſe*; *accuſatio crimen deſiderat*, ſo he; And ſo *Thucydides*, κατηγορία τῶν ἀδικημάτων, an *accuſation* doth *ſuppoſe* and *require* ſome *crime*; but if there be none, what then? τὸν προσήκοντα τῷ φθορισμῷ ὑπομενέτω, let the accuſer ſuffer what puniſhment he well deſerves; and what that is, the ſame *Juſtinian*, that made this law, doth elſewhere ſpecifie, ἀκοινωνησία διηνεκὴς, an *everlaſting*, or, at leaſt, a *very long excommunication*.

Cicero pro M. Cœlio.

Thucyd. l. 1.

Juſtinian. Imp. Petro Magiſtro officiorum.

Balſam. Conſtit. Eccl. Coll. l. 3. ex Novellis.

The Law of *England*, that very *Magna Charta*, to which we appeal in our *other* concerns as a refuge, that is *Sacred* and *Inviolable*, hath long ſince provided, that whoſoever ſhall dare to *ſlander* any *Peer* of the *Kingdom*, or *Prelate* of the *Church*, ſhall ſuffer *Impriſonment*; but if not, if you make ſome ſhift to eſcape *mans Gaol*, yet you are concerned to take heed of *Gods*.

Sure it is, *ſcandal* in a *Miniſter*, whether it be *real* or but *reputed* only, is ever attended with dreadful

circumſtances and *events*; if the *Miniſter* be certainly either *proved* or *believed* to be *wicked*, preſently his *perſon* is *contemned*, his *doctrine* is *ſlighted*, and, upon that ſcore, 'tis too too probable, that the *Souls* under his charge may *periſh*. Now, paſt all peradventure, that man, who *raiſeth* or *ſpreadeth* thoſe *falſe reports* of the Miniſter, that prove ſo *deſtructive* to his *Pariſh*, is juſtly chargeable with all the ſad *conſequences* of thoſe *forged Calumnies*, the reſult whereof is nothing leſs, than the *damnation* of *Souls*.

Remember, Sirs, when you revile ſuch and ſuch *worthy Miniſters* of *God*, you revile thoſe very perſons, who make it their buſineſs, in *Publick* to *Pray*, and in *Private* to *Weep* for ſuch as you; when you baſely reproach *Chriſts pious* and *Learned Servants*, you caſt *dirt* upon the *Chariots* of our *Iſrael*, the *Fathers* of our *Church*, and the *Embaſſadors* of *Heaven*. Remember yet once more, when you raiſe *falſe Aſperſions* againſt the *Miniſter* of ſuch and ſuch a *Pariſh*; you do, what in you lieth, to render his *Perſon odious*, his *Labours vain*, and his *Flock undone* to eternity; and if ſo, 'tis at *your hands* that *God* will require the *blood* of ſo many *Souls*. But,

Secondly, Conſider how much to blame thoſe *Pariſhes* are, that *content* themſelves with a *ſcandalous Miniſter*, if perhaps there be any *one* ſuch perſon yet found amongſt us. That amongſt thoſe *eight* or *nine thouſand* Miniſters, that are in our *Church*, there may be *here* and *there* a man that is Scandalous, is a thing neither *new* nor *ſtrange* at all; In the *Church* of the *Jews*, that was nothing ſo *numerous* as *ours*, we find a *wicked Saul* amongſt the *Prophets*, a *ſcandalous Hophni* and *Phineas* among the *Prieſts*; and in the *New Teſtament*, when the *Miniſtery*, ſet but

but aſide the *Seventy Diſciples*, was confined within *Chriſts* own *family*, we find but amongſt *Twelve Apoſtles* a *weak Peter*, that *denied* his *Lord*; and a *wicked Judas*, that *betrayed* him. Nay more, in the *Church Triumphant* in *Heaven* there was a *proud Lucifer*, and many *Apoſtate Spirits* amongſt the *Angels* thoſe more *Immediate Miniſters* of God. And certainly, whilſt the *Church* below is like the *Moon*, ſubject to *Eclipſes*, *Alterations* and *Changes*, it will not be without her *Spots*.

Τὸν Ἰούδαν ὁ Θεὸς ἐξελέξατο, καὶ τὴν Ἀποστολικὴν ἀξίαν ἐπιχείρισιν. Chryſ. Orat. 4.

And methinks, the preſence of ſome *few* untoward Miniſters, which hath been the *conſtant* and *general unhappineſs* of *all* Churches and Ages, ſhould not be urged as the *peculiar crime* of ours.

Indeed, that *ſcandalous* Miniſters are juſtly *decried*, and ought to be ſeverely *cenſured*, there is no good man but grants; all the *queſtion* is, *where* lieth the *blame*? upon *whom* ſhall we fix it? why thus; one man blames the *Biſhop* that *Ordains*; a ſecond blames the *Patron* that *Preſents*; a third blames the *Dioceſan*, that giveth *Inſtitution* and commands *Induction*.

But notwithſtanding all this, what if I tell you, and that upon very good reaſon, that the *main* fault lieth *ſomewhere* elſe? As to the *Patron* that preſents he is commonly ſome *Noble* perſon, at leaſt ſome man that is *Rich*; and ſince he is ſo, let him *fee* his *Lawyer*, or *anſwer* for *himſelf*; but as to the *Biſhops* of *England*, they are our *Fathers*; and their *juſt honour*, by the *Law* of our *God*, are we bound to *vindicate*; and for *them* who *Ordain* and *Collate* all Miniſters, we have enough to reply.

'Tis well known, that the *Biſhops* of *England* do not pretend, as the *Biſhop* of *Rome* doth, to be *infallible*; after their ſtricteſt enquiry into the *lives* of perſons

perſons to be *Ordained* or *Collated*, 'tis poſſible, that the *wiſeſt* of them *being* but *men*, though *ſtiled Angels*, may be *miſtaken*. 'Tis impoſſible, that the *Biſhop*, who is neither *omnipreſent* nor *omniſcient*, ſhould *certainly* and *perſonally* know the *converſations* of *all*, nor the *hearts* of *any*, that come to be *Ordained* or *Collated*. But yet, whoever doth ſo, doth preſent himſelf to the *Biſhop* as a *pretender* to *Religion* and *Holineſs*; and to juſtifie that pretence of his, he brings along with him *fair Teſtimonials*, *Certificals*, and *Subſcriptions* from ſome eminent perſons, who, upon their own knowledge, bear witneſs to the *Integrity* of his *Converſation*. It is true, what our *Learning* is, what *Intellectuals* we have, the *Biſhop himſelf* may ſift and eaſily know; but as for our *Morals*, there is a neceſſity, that he muſt rely upon that *Teſtimony*, *Character*, and *Credential Letters* that are given by *others*.

Τὸν μέλλοντα προβάλλεσθαι τὴν εἰς ἱερωσύνην ὑπεύθυνον, ὃ δὴ τῷ ὄντι πολλῶν ἀρχεῖον φήμη μόνον, ἀλλὰ μετ' ἐκείνης ἐξ αὐτῶν μάλιστα πάντων ἐξετάζειν τὰ ἐκείνου. Chryſ. περὶ ἱερωσύνης. Orat. 2.

And as it is impoſſible that the *Biſhop*, who is but a *man*, ſhould diſcover the *preſent hypocriſie* of any mans *heart*; ſo is it equally impoſſible, that he ſhould *foreſee* the *future miſcarriages* of any mans *life*. There may be after our Ordination, *Quinquennium Neronis*, I mean, we may carry our ſelves very *fair* for a *while*, and yet *break* out at *laſt*; But what then? is the *Biſhop* to blame for this? tell me, is it poſſible, that the *Governours* of our *Church* ſhould fly as Cherubims? is it poſſible, that our *Biſhops*, who are *clogg'd* with *fleſh*, ſhould move in an *inſtant*, like ſo many *Intelligences*, from *pariſh* to *pariſh*, from *Church* to *Church*, that ſo they may *ſee* and *hear* how the Miniſter *preacheth* upon the *Sunday*, and how he *liveth* all the *week* after? No; 'tis abſolutely neceſſary, that the *Biſhop*, though he be the great

Watch-

Watch-man of *Iſrael* and the *Seer* of the *Church*, muſt notwithſtanding *ſee* with *other* mens *eyes*, and *hear* with *other* mens *ears*; he muſt be *informed* of thoſe *miſdemeanours* in the *Diocеſs*, which 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould otherwiſe know himſelf, and that is the deſign of our *ſolemn convention* this day.

And doubtleſs, the *want* of this *information* is the only *juſt ground* of thoſe *complaints*, that are continued of ſuch and ſuch *miſcarriages* in the *Clergy*. I dare affirm, that if there be any *one ſcandalous* Miniſter yet found amongſt us, the *blame* doth not lie in the *Biſhop*, who is the great *Officer* and *Judge* of the *Church*; but rather in the *Church-Wardens*, thoſe *inferiour Officers*, who are the *Truſtees* of every *Pariſh*.

'Tis like enough, that in ſome Towns the *Officers themſelves* may be men of *Debauched lives*; and, being ſuch, do love *that* Miniſter beſt, that is moſt *like* themſelves, who perhaps *ſpares their* ſins, becauſe they are his *own* too. But if not, then tell me, is your *Miniſter* a *drunkard*? can you *prove* him ſuch? if ſo, then by all the *reſpect*, which you owe to *God*, the *Church*, your *Neighbours*, and *your ſelves* too, you ſtand obliged to *preſent* him; but perhaps you'l ſay, to what purpoſe? I'l tell you what, do but *prove* your *Miniſter* to be a *drunkard*, and I dare warrant, that he will be quickly forced either to *leave* the *Ale-houſe*, or *quit* the *Church*.

Once more; is your *Miniſter* a *Swearer*? can you *prove* him ſuch? if ſo, then by all that *Sacred reſpect*, which you owe to your *own ſolemn* Oaths, you are obliged to *preſent* thoſe *raſh* ones of *his*: and when once that is done, I dare aſſure you, that ſuch a Miniſter, if he will not *reform* his *mouth*, ſhall find it *ſtopp'd*.

To

To conclude; you are this day obliged to preſent whatever is found amiſs among *your ſelves* or *us*; you are concerned to take heed, that your Preſentments be *Candid*, *Fair*, and *Impartial*: *Preſent* no man that is *Innocent*, becauſe perhaps you *hate* him; *ſpare* no man that is *Guilty*, becauſe perhaps you *love* him; were it thus, your *juſt complaints* would be *removed*, your *juſt deſires* would be *accompliſhed*; were it thus, you would all be convinced, that the *deſign* of this days meeting is *Chriſtian*, *high*, and *noble*; in a word, you would find by your *own experience*, that the *End* of a *Viſitation* is not, as ſome dare *falſly* mutter, to *enrich* the *Officers*, but barely to *reform* the *Church*.

Δόξα Θεῷ.

THE END.